

Ethnicity and Religion in the Israel Palestine Conflict and Stability of the Middle East

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Abstract

This study was on the Israel Palestine conflict and stability of the Middle East. The aim of the study was to examine in historical perspectives, the foundation of the crisis to determine the possibility of a resolution. The theoretical framework adopted was the constructivist theory that emphasises the impact of ideas, language, social and cultural forces that determine how Actors define their interests. The ideas and norms held by the Israelis and Palestinians have been the dominant forces steering the conflict. They both have their political aspirations tied to their religious convictions, that evokes deep passion, which most times lead to violent actions, war and even terrorism as evidenced in the various crisis in the Gaza. The intertwine of religion, politics and nationalism in this conflict amplifies its complexity and emotional intensity. This situation utmostly calls for highly inclusive dialogue and negotiations, rooted in respect and shared values as pathway for resolution that will guarantee peace and stability, not only in the Middle East, but the world at large.

Keywords: *Ethnicity and Religion, Israel Palestine Conflict, Stability, Middle East*

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Background to the Study

The international system has witnessed so much dynamics that falls in line with Huntington's clash of civilization. Nationalism, born out of ethnicity and identity has been an outstanding force in these evolving threats to international security. Ethnicity in its political force and religious fundamentalism have consistently had its tow on the stability of the international society. Ethnicity in its political hound, reinforces the reactions in frantic struggle for survival and realization of a group's beliefs, aspirations and demands for inclusion in the common wealth. According to Nnoli 1978, ethnicity is behavioural in form and conflictual in content, because as ethnic consciousness increases in scope and intensity, the socio-economic and political atmosphere becomes charged with tension. Under this circumstance, the ethnic factor assumes a self-fulfilling and self-sustaining dynamics of its own.

When religious course is embedded in ethnic forces, the reaction is usually volatile, because religious convictions and zeal, however distorted or manipulated have always been a driving force in the positive and negative dimensions. The universalistic claims and absolute adherence of religious beliefs have sparked off ideologies that are predisposed to violence. Religious extremists see violence as a sacramental act or a divine duty that has influenced the wave of terrorism in the international community. Anything that a religious believer perceives to be a challenge to his belief can constitute an existential threat and are most likely met with drastic deadly responses. The Middle East region with its peculiar environmental factors are a physical manifestation of these forces. The aim of the study is to examine the trend of ethnicity and religion to determine their influence on the stability of the Middle East with focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Theoretical Framework

As mechanical tools for explanation, the theoretical structure to understand the influence of ethnicity and religion in the Israel – Palestine conflict is the constructivist theory. Constructivism generally maintains that ideas are the main elements in the building of international relations theories. Constructivists emphasize the impact of ideas, language, social discourse and culture as factors that determine how States and other Actors define their interests. According to the constructivists, ideas and norms, not only constrains, but actually construct how Actors define their interests, because people's understanding of their interests, depends on the ideas they hold. To the constructivists, power comes from the influence of ideas, and not just from military forces as magnified by the Realists theorists. For the constructivists, identities and images of the world from how people think of themselves, who they are, and what others in the world think of them, can alter the universe (Chukwu, 2014).

According to the constructivists, socially accepted ideas, norms and values held by powerful States and Non-State Actors are seen as making differences in constructing an international consensus about the rules that should govern the international society. Individual's popular ideas, shape people's self-image, sense of identity and expectations about the purposes and roles in life. For the world at large, leading ideas condition prevailing beliefs in each age about the international system and prospects for humanity. When a new consensus materialises about norms, the modified shared global culture prepares the way for a transformation of

world politics, as playing out on the United Nations in the Gaza conflict. Constructivist theory reminds us that shared images influence the ways actors in the international system see themselves and behave. The collective norms and cultures of people and State Actors define their perceptions, and influence their relations in the world stage. Actors' behaviours are shaped by beliefs, identities and society norms (Mingst 2007).

It is the ideas and beliefs of the Israelis and Palestinians that have spurred the consistent conflict in the Gaza. Religious beliefs, zeal and convictions, however distorted or manipulated, is the sole force in the Gaza conflict. The Israelis and Palestinians have the foundation of their political aspirations to their various religious doctrines. According to Smith 2008, in providing its adherence with a sense of conceptual order, religion often deals with the fundamental problem of disorder. Religion, according to Smith 2008, although often brings comfort and a sense of universal meaning to individuals and society, also features a dark violent side. Religion, as a well spring of hope, life and virtue, steers deep passion that sometimes led to violent action, war and even terrorism. Anything that a religious believer perceives to be a challenge to his belief can constitute an existential threat and will be met with drastic or deadly responses, moreso in the midst of nationalistic aspirations.

The Concept of Religion

Religion is belief in the supernatural, it is a level of consciousness centering on God and Satan, gods, spirits or deities and has a compelling power on man. According to Igwe 2005, many religions were based either directly on the supernatural or the attribution of such qualities upon objective phenomena, with systemic practices, developing to either plead certain causes or appease certain mediums or spirits. Religion is strongly linked to historical, socioeconomic and political forces. Religion appears to be in part a realization by some political-minded revolutionary leaders of the messianic potentials and mobilizing efficacy of the supernatural philosophy. Even in its superstitious nature, most of its original message is both humane, progressive and often revolutionary and liberatory.

Scholars have offered varying conceptions of religion. Aristotle saw religion as a source of moral guidance, promoting virtue and happiness. Aristotle believed that religion played a crucial role in maintaining social order and encouraging individuals to pursue the common good. Weber defined religion as a powerful social force that shaped cultural values and human behaviour. He argued that religion can legitimize authority and influence political and social structures. Marx and Engels viewed religion as an instrument of oppression, a way to pacify the masses and divert attention from the material conditions of their existence. According to Marx, religion obscures the real issues of economic inequality. Wilson, Woodrow, saw religion as closely tied to national identity, recognising that religious heritage plays key roles in shaping national consciousness. His fourteen points Agenda stressed the importance of religious and cultural identity in the formation of nation-States.

Applying these conceptions to the Israel-Palestine conflict, Aristotle's view of religion as moral guidance highlights the role of Jewish and Islamic teachings in shaping the values of the respective communities. Weber's concept of religion as a social force, underscores how

both Judaism and Islam have been used to justify territorial claims and legitimize political authority. Wilson's perspective on religion and national identity resonates with the role of religious narratives in both Israeli and Palestinian national identities. Weber's view recognises the way religion shapes both societal values and political power dynamics as playing out in Israel and Arab relationships in the Middle East.

Conflict

Conflict is the result of interaction and contact among people that make it an inevitable part of human existence. Conflict is obviously an obstacle to progress, political stability, economic prosperity and overall socio-economic enhancement because of its destructive consequences. Conflict is naturally destructive as it inflicts injuries on, neutralize, or subvert the aspirations of opponents. It hinders progress because it encourages individuals to resort to unfriendly behaviours and stirs "win-by-all means necessary attitudes, where emotions take precedence over reason. Conflict led to the disintegration of groups and the scuttling of development projects.

According to Adetula 2006, conflict have the capacity to severally constrain development endeavours by destroying infrastructure, interrupting the production process. Conflict is generally struggles over values and rights, as in display in the Israeli / Palestine imbroglio. Conflict is the pursuit of incompatible goals or interests by different groups or individuals. Conflict is indeed an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence because of constant divergent needs and interests.

As defined by Coser 1956, conflict is a struggle between two or more people over values and claims to status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. According to Coser, conflict arises whenever one party perceives that one or more goals or purposes, or means of achieving a goal or preferences is been threatened or hindered by activities of one or more parties, and diverting resources away from productive uses. Resources originally planned for the funding of development projects are in conflict situations, diverted to conflict management and resolution activities. Conflict damage countries rich cultural landscapes, undermine human security and prospects for sustainable development.

Struggle for survival is a major consequence of conflict that impacts terribly on human wellbeing and development as a whole. Conflict inflicted countries face a range of unique context specific challenges that constrain both capacity and resources and prevent the accrual of sustainment of development gains. Mis management of conflicts situation have been a bane on development. The Israel Palestine Saga typifies these enumerations on conflict.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a term specifically identified with a group of people and used as a political force for identity. According to Igwe 2005, ethnicity can be seen in purely political terms, ethnic nationalism and the practice of ethnic ideology also known as tribalism. Ethnicity has a political force. Esman 1994 defines an ethnic group as any large group of people, who claim

together a common origin or common descent or fictive kingship and possesses distinctive and valued cultural markers in the form of customs, dress and especially language, and traces a common history, and expects to share a common identity. The reactions of these individuals or groups who feel short changed, marginalised, and, or exploited activates the urge for nationalism.

Colonialism injected the spirit of ethnic competition among African political class. Ethnic identity was a major political tool for claims for more political representation in the colonial government. Ethnicity can be seen as an identity, based on presumed similarity of language, ancestry history, society, culture, nation, race or social treatment within a residing area. Ethnicity is an inherited status, based on the society in which one lives. Membership of an ethnic group are usually defined by a shared cultural heritage, ancestry history, homeland, language or dialect, symbolic systems, such as religion, mythology and virtual, cuisine, dressing style, art or physical appearance. Ethnicity is more than skin, colour, or physical characteristics, language, song and dance. Ethnicity is the embodiment of values, institutions and patterns of behaviour. It is a composite whole, representing a people's historical experience, aspirations and world view (Deng 1997).

Igwe 2005 see ethnicity as a pure political term for ethnic ideology or simply tribalism that necessitates the exploitation of differences in nationality for any purpose with corresponding suspicious and hostile attitudes towards others, especially those held to be in competitive relation with one's own. Ethnicity is everywhere, between the previously mutually antagonistic, but now co-operating nations of Europe having successfully built strong and patriotic class societies. In Asia, various nationalities have to struggled for limited space and resources. In the Americas remorseful ethnic cleansings of the Natives and Slaves against the African Americans and previous histories of continental hostilities and antagonisms between the dominant majesties fuelled negative relations is still playing out to date. In Oceania and Australia, the native populations had not fared better. Africa has more tales, where many nationalities were forcibly brought together by colonialism without their consent into the same country, or perhaps much worst, split between too or more hostile States. The Palestine and Israeli consistent agitations also have its root in ethnicity.

Ethnicity has led to serious and calamitous wars in the past, but appears to have substantially disappeared in Europe due, in part to prosperity and the class structured society in the former Soviet Union. It degenerated into independent statehoods in the largely ethnic-based republics. In the former Yugoslavia, for instance, it led to a break up war and ethnic cleansing or deliberate elimination of disliked ethnic groups. In the United States, prosperity, though had helped out, but not entirely solved off the problems of race and ethnic relations. Ethnicity is indeed an important means by which people may identify with a larger group mainly for political gains. In the 19th century, modern States generally sought legitimacy through their claim to represent nations or nation-states, then composed of populations that have been excluded from national life for one reason or another. Members of such excluded groups, consequently will either demand inclusion based on equality or seek autonomy, sometimes, even to the extent of complicit political separation from their nation-state.

As ethnic consciousness increases, the socio-economic and political atmosphere becomes charged with tension that ethnic hostility and loyalty become the norm. Globalisation process aimed at sweeping all barriers attached to national boundaries for a universal homogenization of ideas, cultures, values and even life styles, has strengthened ethnic and identity politics all over the world.

The Middle East in Historical and Political Perspectives

The Middle East is a large and diverse geographical area located in South West Asia and North East Africa. The Middle East extends over 2,000 miles from the Black Sea in the North, to the Arabian Sea in the South; The Middle East is the region that includes countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Israeli, Lebanon and Egypt. According to Halim 1993, the Middle East is located where Asia, Africa and Europe meet. The area is known for its deserts, like the Arabian Desert, and important rivers like the Rivers Tigris and Euphrates. The climate is mostly hot and dry, with some fertile lands, especially places near the rivers.

The Middle East is often called the cradle of civilization. Ancient civilizations like the Sumerians, Egyptians and Babylonians lived there. The Middle East is also termed the “fertile crescent” coined by James Henry Breasted, in 1914 to refer to the area of fertile agricultural zones that formed the basis for early civilizations, in what is now Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Scholars studying the ancient past usually use the term “Near East for this area. (Halim, B 1993), Many Empires and cultures have ruled the Middle East. The Persian, Roman and Byzantine Empires all controlled parts of the region at different times. By the 7th century, Islam began in the Arabian Peninsula and quickly spread across the Middle East, ushering in new cultural and religious changes.

The Ottoman Empire was a major power in the Middle East from the 15th century until the early 20th century. After World War I (WWI), the Ottoman Empire fell apart, and new countries were formed. The discovery of oil in the 20th century marked a turning point in the economic and political landscape of the region. Today, the Middle East is known for its rich history, diverse cultures and significant geopolitical interests. It has remained a region of great interest and influence in world politics. Her political landscape has been shaped by complex interplay of local, regional and international forces.

The emergence of Islam in the 7th century marked a transformative period, uniting diverse communities under a shared cultural and political framework. The discovery of oil in the 20th century revolutionised the Middle East, turning countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq into global economic powerhouses. The new found wealth in oil facilitated rapid modernization and increased the regions geopolitical significance. However, oil also became a source of contention, both within and between States. Domestically, disputes over the distribution of oil revenue exacerbated inequality and political unrest. Internationally, the region's energy resources attracted foreign powers whose interventions often heightened local conflicts, as was in Iraq, Libanon etc. (Benny, M. 2001).

The Arab – Israeli Conflict

An outstanding and enduring consequential issues in the Middle East politics is the Arab – Israeli conflict. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, following the horrors of the Second World War, led to multiple wars and lasting dispute with her Arab neighbours. Central to the conflict are issues of territorial sovereignty, the status of Palestinian refugees and the broader question of Palestinian statehood. Decades of negotiations, uprisings and wars have made the Arab-Israeli Saga, a defining feature of the Middle East region's political landscape. The Iranian Revolution also inspired Islamist movements across the Middle East that further complicating the regions political dynamics.

The Arab Spring from 2010 also revealed a deep – rooted governance dynamics facing the region. The Saudi Iran rivalry has also created a feature of the Middle East politics. The normalisation of relations between Israel and some Arab nations also represent a significant shift in regional politics that prioritize economic co-operation and strategic alliances over historical exigencies. The ongoing tensions between Israel and Palestinian Groups in the Gaza rooted in historical, political and territorial forces, stand as one of the most persistent disputes in the history of the region. According to Rotberg 2007, the Israel and Palestine region of the Middle East has been a focal point of civilizations and empires, and its strategic location and religious significance have made it both a prize and a battleground. The current conflict, however, is largely shaped by events of the last century, from the rise of Zionism and the collapse of empires.

By history, the land was home to the ancient societies of the Canaanites, Israelites and Philistines, but later fell under the control of successive empires, including the Romans and Byzantines. By the 19th century, amidst widespread persecution in Europe, the Zionist movement emerged with the goal of establishing a homeland for Jewish people in Palestine, then under Ottoman rule. The movement gained momentum, and many Jewish immigrants began arriving in the region, increasing tensions with the local Arab population, who viewed the growing Jewish presence with suspicion and resistance. After World War I and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, Britain assumed control of Palestine under a League of Nations Mandate. During this period, the 1917 Balfour Declaration that expressed British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, fuelled both hope for the Jews and resentment among the Arabs. Jewish immigration increased further, particularly as anti-Semitism and violence surged in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s. The Arab population, seeing their land and political future threatened, resisted this influx leading to persistent unrest and clashes (Rashid 2020).

The aftermath of WWII and the horrors of the Holocaust intensified international sympathy for the Jewish cause. In 1947, the UN proposed a partition plan to create separate Jewish and Arab States in Palestine, with Jerusalem as an international city. While the Jewish community accepted the plan, the Arab community rejected it, arguing that it unfairly favoured the Jewish minority. In 1948, as British forces withdrew, Israel declared her independence. This move led to the first Arab-Israeli war, when Israel expanded its territory beyond the UN Proposed borders. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced, an event they referred to as

the “Nakba” or catastrophe, which has remained a source of deep grievance. The decades following Israel's creation have been marked by repeated wars. In 1967, during the Six-Day War, Israel Captured Significant territories, including the West Bank, Gaza strip, and East Jerusalem, areas that are still central in the conflict today. These lands, particularly East Jerusalem hold profound cultural and religious importance for Palestinians and are viewed by many as integral to a future Palestinian State (Bregman 2014).

Despite UN resolutions calling for withdrawal, Israel maintained control over these areas, citing security concerns and historical ties. The 1973 Yom Kippur war, launched by Egypt and Syria on Israel, marked another chapter of violence, but also opened the door to peace efforts. In 1978, the Camp David Accords facilitated a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, the first between Israel and an Arab State. While this agreement was a milestone, it did not address the Palestinian question. Similarly, the 1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) raised hopes for a two-state solution, granting limited autonomy to Palestinians in parts of the West Bank and Gaza. Unfortunately, the deep divisions, political instability and mutual distrust prevented further progress.

Recent years have seen the conflict remain unresolved, with periodic escalations in violence and ongoing disputes. Israel's construction of settlements in the West Bank, deemed illegal under international law, has been a major obstacle to peace. These settlements appear to complicate the possibility of establishing a contiguous Palestinian State. In Gaza, which is governed by Hamas, a Palestinian militant group, recurrent conflicts with Israel have resulted in significant civilian suffering on both sides. The status of Jerusalem, claimed as a capital by both Israelis and Palestinians, remain a flashpoint, symbolizing the broader struggle for Sovereignty and Recognition. Despite numerous peace initiatives, the region's future has remained uncertain, with moments of hope often overshadowed by cycles of violence and political stagnation as currently witnessed since October 2023 abduction of Israelis by the Hamas group (Rotberg, 2007).

Ethnic and Religious in Forces in the Conflict

The Israeli/Palestine region is home to a wide range of socio-economic and religious activities that reflect its diverse cultural heritage and economic potentials. These activities play a vital role in shaping the lives of the people in the region. The religious beliefs and identities of Israelis and Palestinians are deeply intertwined with their historical narratives, cultural practices and political aspirations, making them central to understanding the complexities of the conflict. Judaism, the predominant religion among Israelis, profoundly shapes their national and cultural identity. As one of the oldest monotheistic religions, Judaism centres on the belief in one God and the teachings of the Torah, which includes the first five books of the Hebrew Bible.

Jewish identity is often linked to the concept of the “Promised Land”, rooted in biblical narratives that grant the Jewish people the land of Israel as part of a divine covenant. Religious practices such as observing the Sabbath, following dietary laws, and celebrating festivals like the Passover and Yom Kippur, reinforce a strong sense of community and

continuity with Jewish history. Generally, Israeli society is diverse in religious observance, ranging from secular Jews to ultra-orthodox communities, leading internal debates about religion's role in public life.

For Palestinians, Islam is the predominant religion, with most identified as Sunni Muslims. Islam is a monotheistic faith that follows the teachings of the Quran and the Prophet Mohammed. Palestinian Muslim identity is closely tied to the land of Palestine, which includes significant Islamic sites like the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, considered the third holiest site in Islam. Key Islamic practices, including prayer, fasting and pilgrimage, foster a deep sense of religious duty and unity. A minority of Palestinian Christians also maintain a long historical presence in the region, celebrating their own religious traditions and holidays. For both Israelis and Palestinians, religion extends beyond personal faith to serve as a cornerstone of national identity. Many Jewish Israelis view the establishment of Israel in 1948 as the fulfilment of biblical prophecy and a return to their ancestral homeland. This sentiment is especially strong among religious Zionists, who see the modern State as part of a divine plan. Similarly, many Palestinian roots their connection to the land in Islamic history and tradition, framing their struggle for statehood in terms of defending holy sites and preserving their heritage (Armstrong, K. 1997).

Religious fundamentalism has intensified the conflict, with Groups on both sides viewing the land and its control as a divine mandate. Jewish fundamentalists, especially in the settler movement, assert a biblical right to settle in all parts of the historical land of Israeli, often clashing with Palestinian residents. On the other hand, Islamic fundamentalist Groups like the Hamas, see the conflict as a religious duty to liberate Palestine from Israeli control, opposing any compromise that recognises the State of Israel and advocating for an Islamic State across the entire region. The interplay of religion and identity in the Israel Palestine conflict underscore its complexity and intractability. These deeply held beliefs shape national narratives, influence political decisions and contribute to the ongoing nature of the conflict. A nuanced understanding of the religious dimensions is essential for addressing the challenges and peace pathways for the region.

According to Armstrong 1997, Jerusalem revered by the Jews, Muslims and Christians alike is the epicentre of the religious and political forces of the conflict for the Jews, Jerusalem is home to the ancient Temple Mount, where the First and Second Temples once stood. The Western Wall, a remnant of the Second Temple, remains the holiest site in Judaism, drawing pilgrims and worshippers from around the world for many Jewish Israelis, Jerusalem symbolises the culmination of a historical and religious journey, and some believe in the eventual rebuilding of the Third Temple on the Temple Mount, a vision that holds deep significance for Jewish religions fundamentalists. For Muslims, Jerusalem is equally sacred, housing the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the rock on the Haram al-sharife, or Noble sanctuary. The Al-Aqsa Mosque is the third holiest site in Islam, following Mecca and Medina, and is believed to be the site of the Prophet Mohammed's Night journey to heaven. The Dome of the Rock, with its Iconic golden dome, marks a revered Islamic land mark, symbolizing centuries of Islamic presence and religious significance.

Religious symbols further reinforce the cultural and national identities of both sides. For Israelis, the Star of David of the Menorah are not just religious emblems, but national symbols that reflect the unity of Jewish faith and statehood. The Israeli flag itself, featuring the Star of David, signifies this bond. On the Palestinian side, Islamic symbols such as the crescent moon and Quranic Calligraphy are integral to their identity. The Palestinian flag, with its colours representing Arab dynasties, reflect a blend of Islamic and nationalistic heritage, symbolizing resistance and unity of the Arab world. The Temple Mount / Al-Aqsa Mosque compound is a frequent source of tension, with clashes erupting during significant religious periods like Ramadan or Jewish holidays. These confrontations often stem from disputes over access as perceived threats to the sanctity of the sites, or changes to the longstanding status quo. Similarly, the Western Wall, while a sacred site for the Jews, is situated close to the Al-Aqsa compound, making any changes in its surroundings, highly sensitive and potentially contentious (Sara, R. 2007).

The religious importance of this site extends beyond personal faith, into the political sphere. For many Jewish Israelis, maintaining control over Jerusalem and its holy places is inseparable from their national identity and security, particularly for religious Zionists who see the establishment of Israel as a fulfilment of biblical prophecy. On the other hand, Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation is often framed in religious terms, particularly by Groups like Hamas, who emphasize the duty to protect Islamic holy sites. This religious narrative mobilizes local and international support for their cause. For the global Jewish community, the Western Wall and Temple Mount represent a direct link to their heritage and history. Similarly, Muslims worldwide hold Al-Aqsa in profound spiritual esteem. This global connection ensures that developments in Jerusalem resonate far beyond the region, evoking strong reactions from Jewish and Muslim communities around the world and influencing international politics, as displayed the world over, from the Gaza war.

According to Avi 2001, the intertwine of religion, politics and nationalism in the Israel-Palestine conflict amplifies its complexity and emotional intensity. Sacred sites and symbols are not just markers of faith, but are also deeply embedded in the identities and aspirations of both peoples, ensuring their enduring centrality to the struggle for land and sovereignty. These symbols evoke a collective memory of survival, return and sovereignty. The spiritual significance of Jerusalem's sacred sites is inseparable from their political implications. The universal reverence for these sites means that any development in Jerusalem reverberate across the globe, eliciting strong reactions from Jewish and Muslim communities alike. This global attention further complicates the already delicate balance of the conflict as international actors and religious communities exert influence on the dynamics of the politics of the region.

Conclusion

The Israeli-Palestine conflict demonstrates how deeply religion can intertwine with politics and ethnicity in historical foundation. It highlights the powerful roles of faith and history in shaping narratives and driving actions of both the Israelis and the Palestinians. The religious course and ethnic forces in the Israel/Palestine conflict have obviously brought volatile

reactions that have continued to destabilise political trends in the Middle East and the world over. Ethnicity has led to serious and calamitous wars in the past because as ethnic consciousness increases, the socio-economic and political atmosphere becomes charged with tensions that leads to violence. The Middle East, known for its rich history, diverse culture and significant geo-political interest has remained a region of great interests and influence in World politics. The emergence in the 7th century of Islam with its religious force, marked a transformative period. The discovery of oil in the 20th century revolutionised the region, turning it into global economic powerhouse. The regions energy resources attracted foreign powers whose interventions often heightened local conflicts. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 led to multiple wars and lasting dispute with her Arab neighbours. Decades of negotiations, uprising and wars have made Arab-Israeli debate, a defining feature of the Middle East political landscape. The ongoing tensions between Israel and Palestinian Groups in the Gaza, rooted in historical, political, religious and territorial forces, stands as one of the most persistent disputes in the history of the region. The status of Jerusalem, claimed as a capital by both the Israelis and Palestinians remain a flashpoint, symbolising the broader struggle for Sovereignty and Recognition evoked by ethnicity. The intertwine of religion, politics and nationalism in the Israel-Palestine conflict amplifies its complexity and emotional intensity.

Recommendations

Based on the complexities in the Israel Palestine crisis, it is obvious that resolving it requires; A highly inclusive dialogue and negotiations. Leaders from both sides, including political and religious figures, must engage in dialogue that emphasizes mutual recognition and practical solution facilitated by international mediators to ensure fairness.

- i. Safeguarding religious sites through joint agreements and promoting grassroots initiatives in education and cultural exchange can build trust and reduce tensions.
- ii. A two-state solution based on the 1967 borders, with mutual land adjustments and recognition of each other's sovereignty is very crucial
- iii. Religious forces must be persuaded to ease off terrorist dispositions.

These steps, rooted in respect and shared values, provide a pathway to peace and stability in the Gaza, the Middle East, and the world community.

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